

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NICOSI 00523 241729Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 /086 W
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O P 241715Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7328
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0523

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, CY, EG
SUBJECT: CYPRUS/EGYPT

REF: NICOSIA 505

SUMMARY: GOC IS ASSIDUOUSLY AVOIDING OVERRACTING TO
EGYPTIAN DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS IN ATTEMPT TO
PREVENT FURTHER DAMAGE AND IS CONSIDERING MEANS OF
PROPITIATING GOE IN HOPES OF EVENTUALLY MENDING THE
BREACH. END SUMMARY.

1. GOC IN ALL ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS IS MAKING CLEAR
THAT IT REGRETS EGYPT'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS
DIPLOMATIC MISSION AND TO REQUEST CYPRUS TO DO THE SAME.
CYPRIOT FOREIGN MINISTER CHRISTOPHIDES SAID FEB 23
THAT GOC WAS NOT RETALIATING IN RECALLING ITS AMBAS-
SADOR FROM CAIRO (HE IS SCHEDULED TO COME BACK FEB 26)
BUT WAS ACCEDING TO EGYPTIAN REQUEST. MOREOVER, HE
SAID GOC HAD NOT ORDERED OR SET A DATE FOR DEPARTURE
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PAGE 02 NICOSI 00523 241729Z

OF EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (WHO IS LEAVING FEB 26).
AT SAME TIME, GOC IS EMPHASIZING POSITIVE ASPECT
OF AGREEMENT TO RETAIN INTEREST SECTIONS, PRESIDENT
KYPRIANOU DESCRIBING THIS AS ARRANGEMENT TO PERMIT
EMBASSIES TO "CONTINUE TO FUNCTION AT A LOW LEVEL."
(WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONE LOW-RANKING DIPLOMAT AND AN
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF THREE WILL REMAIN IN RESPECTIVE

INTEREST SECTIONS; CYPRIOTS WILL WORK UNDER BRITISH
FLAG IN CAIRO, BUT WHICH COUNTRY WILL PROTECT EGYPTIAN
INTERESTS IN NICOSIA IS NOT YET KNOWN.)

2. OUT OF EVIDENT WORRY OVER OTHER POSSIBLE ADVERSE
MEASURES GOC MIGHT TAKE, SUCH AS SHUTTING DOWN
OF NICOSIA/CAIRO AIR LINK (TWO WEEKLY FLIGHTS BY EACH
COUNTRY'S FLAG AIRLINE) AND THOSE STEPS MENTIONED REFTEL,
GOC IS TAKING CONCILIATORY STANCE IN ITS RESPONSES TO
EGYPTIAN ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, PRESIDENT
KYPRIANOU, IN BRIEF BUT WELL-CONSIDERED STATEMENT FEB 23,
SPOKE TO WHAT APPEARS TO BE MINIMUM EGYPTIAN DEMAND --
THAT TWO TERRORISTS BE EXTRADITED TO EGYPT. KYPRIANOU
APPEALED TO SADAT TO REALIZE THAT CYPRUS MUST APPLY LOCAL
JURISDICTION IN THIS CASE, BUT NOTED THAT "AFTER THE
COURT'S VERDICT WE SHALL DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF THE
FATE OF THE TWO MURDERERS." AN INDICATION THAT HE
MIGHT BE WILLING TO HAND OVER THE TWO TERRORISTS TO
EGYPT AFTER TRIAL. (WE KNOW FROM OTHER GOC SOURCES
THAT GOVERNMENT LEGAL OFFICIALS SEARCHED, UNSUCCESSFULLY,
FOR SOME LEGAL MEANS OF EXTRADITING TERRORISTS.)
ELSEWHERE IN STATEMENT, KYPRIANOU SAID HE WAS OVER-
LOOKING ABUSIVE LANGUAGE SADAT HAD USED IN REFERRING
TO CYPRUS AND ITS PRESIDENT. HE SAID SADAT'S PRESENT
PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE WAS JUSTIFIABLE. HE APPEALED
TO EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT TO RESPOND TO CYPRUS' CONSTRUCTIVE
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PAGE 03 NICOSI 00523 241729Z

INTENTIONS, AND HOPED PASSAGE OF TIME WOULD LEAD TO
FULL RESTORATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. IN ANOTHER CONCILIATORY GESTURE TOWARD EGYPTIANS, CYPRIOT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEB 23 OBSERVED ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE
IN MEMORY OF YUSEF EL SEBAI AS A GREAT FRIEND OF CYPRUS.

4. IN ADDITION TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND
GESTURES, WE KNOW THAT
GOC MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHRISTOPHIDES HAS CONSIDERED OTHER
MEANS OF PROPITIATING EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP. ONE THOUGHT WAS TO
SEND A MINISTERIAL LEVEL MISSION TO EGYPT (ALTHOUGH THIS WAS
DISCARDED.) ANOTHER WAS TO CONTRIVE TO LET EGYPTIANS INTERPRET
THE TRANSFER OF GOC INTERIOR MINISTER VENIAMIN, WHOSE ASSIGNMENT
TO LONDON AS HIGH COMMISSIONER TO LONDON IS RUMORED TO BE IN THE
OFFING IN ANY CASE, AS APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT FOR "HIS MISHANDLING
" OF THE LARNACA INCIDENT.

5. COMMENT. SHAKEN AND SHORT OF CONFIDENCE IN ITS OWN HANDLING
OF THE LARNACA INCIDENT, AND FEARFUL OF FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS
FROM IT, GOC APPEARS TO BE SUMMONING RESERVES OF PRUDENCE AND
SELF-DISCIPLINE IN ATTEMPT TO RIDE OUT THE STORM.

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